



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Teton
National Park

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Grand Teton National Park News Release

Control of Non-Native Plant Underway in Rockefeller Parkway

Grand Teton National Park Superintendent Mary Gibson Scott announced today that the National Park Service has undertaken aggressive efforts to control a non-native sedge unexpectedly found at a restoration site in the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway.


A gravel pit located near the Snake River, used from the 1950s through the early 1990s, has been the site of restoration efforts since 2002. Restoration efforts have been paid for by funds from the Federal Lands Highway Program and the State of Wyoming Abandoned Mine Lands Program. Staff from Grand Teton National Park, which administers the Parkway, collaborated with the National Park Service Water Resource Division and Colorado State University on restoration designs, which called for reclaiming the site to a mix of wetlands, oxbow ponds, and upland features similar to those found on the adjacent undisturbed Snake River floodplain.

In June 2003, contractors planted more than 580,000 willow cuttings and other herbaceous wetland plants, which should have been propagated from locally collected seeds. Among the local native plants are three sedge (*Carex*) species, spikerush, and bluejoint grass.

In July 2004, Dr. David Cooper, a wetland scientist from Colorado State University, while inspecting the site for the National Park Service, became concerned that some of the growing sedge plants did not look like a native species. However, collection and positive identification of the plants was not possible until they flowered in August. National Park Service botanists at Grand Teton National Park, Yellowstone National Park and in the Intermountain Regional Office did not recognize the species as known to exist in the ecosystem. Samples were sent to two sedge experts at the University of Michigan and Washington State University. Both independently identified the plants as *Carex feta*, a sedge native to coastal California, Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia. It is not native to Wyoming or the Rocky Mountain Region. An estimated 140,000 of the non-native plants are currently spread out over about 30 acres of the restoration area.

National Park Service policy prohibits deliberate introductions of non-native species, and calls for control of infestations, especially early on in their discovery when efforts to contain their spread may be most successful. The spread of this non-native species, up or downstream in the Snake River drainage, poses a threat to the ecology of the John D. Rockefeller Jr., Memorial Parkway and adjacent Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. In keeping with Integrated Pest Management Plans, Park Superintendent Mary Gibson Scott approved the use of hand pulling and the selective application of the herbicide "Rodeo" to control the new infestation.

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Members of the National Park Service exotic plant management teams (EPMTs) located at Lake Mead, Carlsbad Caverns, Glacier, and Yellowstone National Parks are assisting Grand Teton staff with control efforts this week. Continued monitoring and subsequent control efforts will likely be necessary for several years at the Snake River Pit. A review is underway to determine how *Carex feta* might have turned up in the restoration site.

Grand Teton National Park 75th Anniversary ~ 1929-2004
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